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By- Johnson, G. Orville

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The purposes of the workshop were (1) to provide a means by which professionally trained educators in special education and vocational education should work as a team in designing local school programs for educable mentally retarded students, (2) to create favorable attitudes in special education and vocational education teachers toward combined educational services for educable mentally retarded students, and (3) to develop guidelines and materials that could be used in organizing and implementing combined programs. The general content of the sections conducted by the specialists in mental retardation included general home and environmental background, learning characteristics, adjustment and behavior, physical and motor abilities, general education achievement, and vocational and community adjustment. The vocational education specialists discussed such topics as the objectives of vocational education, distributive education, content areas, selection of students, skills taught and knowledges required, and expected outcomes. (CH)

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**INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP FOR SPECIAL
EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TEACHERS.** *Final Report,*

²
G. Orville Johnson
The Center for Vocational and Technical Education *RUF 67355*
The Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

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HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE**

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G. Orville Johnson

**The Center for Vocational and Technical Education
The Ohio State University**

Columbus, Ohio 43210

February 1969

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SUMMARY

Interdisciplinary Workshop for Special Education and Vocational Education Teachers

Twenty-six special education and vocational education teachers attended an interdisciplinary workshop, which was sponsored by the College of Education and The Center for Research and Leadership Development in Vocational Education of The Ohio State University from August 19, 1968 to August 30, 1968. The purposes of the workshop were: (1) to provide a means by which professionally trained educators in special education and vocational education could work as a team in designing local school programs for educable mentally retarded students; (2) to create favorable attitudes in special education and vocational education teachers toward combined special education and vocational education services for educable mentally retarded students; and (3) to develop guidelines and materials that could be used in organizing and implementing combined programs for educable mentally retarded students.

As the initial step in attaining these objectives, specialists in mental retardation and vocational education conducted workshop sessions that helped build a framework for the teachers to discuss their problems on a basis of mutual understanding. In subsequent discussions teachers decided that: (1) admission to combined programs should be broadened to include more than the defined or diagnosed educable mentally retarded; and (2) job preparation programs should be based on the student's behavior and environment, and an analysis of local employment opportunities. Suggested guidelines for setting up integrated programs that would meet the needs of the special education student included: (1) basing the vocational education program on the student's personal characteristics and his potential for work success as far as the areas of academic and psychomotor skills are concerned; (2) use of specialists in program planning and implementation; and (3) use of a prescriptive approach to instruction in conjunction with the determination of specific personal characteristics and educational objectives for each student. It was recommended that special education-vocational education teams acquaint their principals and other general school administrators with the kind of program they are attempting, outlining its goals, assets, and limitations.

INTRODUCTION

Goals of the Workshop

The goals of the workshop, which was conducted August 19-30, 1968 at The Ohio State University, were to provide a means by which professionally trained educators in Special Education, (mental retardation), and Vocational Education could work as a team in planning and carrying out effective and realistic programs for educable mentally retarded students that could be implemented in representative local school districts. Second, to create favorable attitudes in Special Education and Vocational Education Teachers for ultimately realizing the need for and making combined Special Education and Vocational Educational services available to and effective for the educable mentally retarded students. And third, to provide materials and guidelines developed in the workshop for further testing and use in other appropriate educational settings.

Need for the Workshop

Such a workshop was considered to be essential since typically secondary programs for the educable mentally retarded are under the exclusive direction of the special educator. This person may or may not draw upon the potential educational experiences offered within the school and/or school system depending upon their availability to the mentally retarded and this teacher's personal knowledges and biases in regard to their use as well as the knowledge and biases of the person providing the services, and his willingness to make them available. In most instances, the work-study program is also within the Special Educator's control and under his direction. When mentally retarded children are assigned to the various shops and other vocational training facilities, the Industrial Arts and Vocational Education teachers are generally unfamiliar with the educational characteristics and educational needs of the retarded students. Similarly, the Special Educators are unfamiliar with the potential educational experiences available within the Vocational Education programs. Thus, situations develop whereby educational experiences that are potentially available are not provided, unrealistic expectations are proposed for the student, and, as a result, the mentally retarded children in general suffer from lack of appropriate and meaningful educational experiences.

Purpose of the Workshop

The purpose of the workshop was then to, in some fashion, attempt to insure that the ultimate programs for the secondary school age educable mentally retarded youngster become as effective as possible. Only in this way could his potential be exploited.

He must be provided with an optimum educational program. It was felt that this could be accomplished by bringing together a group of Special Educators and Vocational Educators for a period of time, so that they could interact and learn from each other as well as from experts in the two fields. In this way the Special Educator would become familiar with the problems, programs, objectives, and potential educational experiences available in the Vocational Education field. At the same time the Vocational Educator could become acquainted with the contributions that these Special Educators could make, so that the mentally retarded person would be an effective student in the Vocational Education classes and thus derive the maximum benefit from them as possible. It was felt these educators must learn how to cooperate. They must coordinate their efforts and thus compliment each other's programs for the good of these students. Only in this way could a total, unified, interdisciplinary program ever be achieved.

METHOD

Selection of Workshop Participants

Originally, 50 participants from selected mid-west states (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan) were to be selected. The selection would consist of 25 teams of teachers, each team consisting of a Special Educator and a Vocational Educator from the same school system. State Directors of Special Education and Vocational Education were contacted and requested to provide the director of the project with names of persons they felt would be interested in this program and would derive benefit from it. It was hoped that they then would return to their communities and attempt to develop a comprehensive, coordinated program for the educable mentally retarded in their schools. Letters of invitation were immediately sent to the persons that were recommended by the State Directors.

Here a major problem arose. Due to the fact that the original proposal had been submitted during the spring and final approval was not forthcoming from the U. S. Office of Education until late spring, by the time lists of names had been obtained from the State Directors, numbers of the schools had completed their academic year. Thus, teachers had left the schools to return to their homes or had made commitments for the summer that prohibited them from participating in the workshop. In many instances, teachers did not receive the original invitation, since it had been sent to the school that had been employing them.

The final compliment of the workshop participants consisted of Special Education teachers and Vocational Education teachers who expressed an interest in participating. In most instances, a team could not be formed since the two groups of teachers came from separate schools. Even using this technique and eliminating the "team" criteria, the projected fifty members for the workshop were unable to be obtained. The final number of participants who attended the workshop was 27 representing the states of Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan. No teachers came from Wisconsin.

Program Content and Schedule

No attempt was made in the preparation of this report to repeat the specific content of the discussions that were conducted over the two-week period for two reasons. First, the material covered during the initial week relating to a general overview of mental retardation and vocational education can be readily obtained

from the many books available in these areas. Second, the discussion material was appropriate for this group of educators in this setting at this time. In all probability, however, it would be inappropriate for another group from a somewhat different area. Instead, the following discussion is concerned with the selection and organization of the materials and sub-groups and a broad, topical outline of the material. Thus, anyone desiring to repeat the experience can do so without being restricted by the events associated with this set of learning experiences.

In order that the Special Education and Vocational Education teachers could discuss their mutual problems on a basis of mutual understanding, (thus enabling communication and planning to take place), the total group was split into halves during the first week. Specialists in Vocational Education selected by the Ohio State Department of Education conducted discussions with the Special Education teachers to help them understand Vocational Education and the potential experiences that the Vocational Educator could provide mentally retarded pupils. Simultaneously, a specialist in mental retardation conducted discussions with the Vocational Education teachers to help them understand the educational and potential vocational characteristics and abilities of the educable mentally retarded.

The general content of the sessions conducted by the specialist in mental retardation consisted of a broad series of informal lectures and discussions covering the nature of mental retardation as it concerned the educable group. He went into such broad topics as:

1. General home and environmental background.
2. Learning characteristics.
3. Adjustment and behavior.
4. Physical and motor abilities.
5. General educational achievement.
6. Vocational and community adjustment.

The Vocational Education specialists discussed with the teachers of the mentally retarded such topics as:

1. The objectives of Vocational Education.
2. Distributive education.
3. Content areas.
4. Selection of students.
5. Skills taught and knowledges required.

6. Expected outcomes.

At the end of the first week, the Special Education teachers and the Vocational Education teachers were brought together and encouraged to interact and relate their respective feelings and present their ideas concerning a comprehensive secondary program for the mentally retarded. This was conducted under the direction of a Special Educator who was particularly competent in group interaction. Where specific problems arose, small groups were formed to work with a second person to come up with solutions. The results of these small group study sessions were then presented to the total group.

Among the topics taken up were:

1. "What general vocational experiences should be included in every mentally retarded pupil's program?"
2. "How does one select the specific vocational experiences that will be the greatest value to a specific pupil?"
3. "How can the instruction of the vocational education teacher compliment the instruction of the special education teacher and vice versa?"
4. "What pre-experiences need to be provided by the schools to prepare a pupil to participate in this program?"
5. "How is the financing for these programs provided?"

A number of controversial issues were raised by the two groups of teachers reflecting the differences in initial training, orientation, and specific educational objectives. These differences had to be resolved before anything approaching an effective solution to the definition of a total program could be achieved. Among the more acute issues discussed were admission and job preparation.

In defining the kinds of students that they felt they should be working with (admitted to the program), the two groups of teachers eventually broadened the criteria to include more than the defined or diagnosed educable mentally retarded. They felt there were numerous other students who would also benefit from such a program and should also be included. The following criteria of eligibility for students who would derive value from such a program was eventually accepted:

1. Students who are presently enrolled in some special education class in junior and senior high schools,
2. Students who have moved through regular classes but who are functioning in the educable mentally retarded range of achievement,

3. Students moving from special education classes at the elementary level to the regular, traditional classes at the secondary school,
4. Students having records of consistent failure in academic subjects, failing in an average of two or more subjects per year in the secondary school,
5. Students having borderline intelligence as indicated by minimal academic success and/or appear to be potential drop-outs as defined by a lack of interest in school and their past history of failure.

A great deal of time was also spent discussing an effective job preparation program. It was felt that first a thorough assessment of the potential employees present behavior, his previous behavior, and the social milieu in which he (the student) is presently functioning and has functioned was essential. Second a study should be made of the current availability of jobs as well as related considerations such as the numbers of potential workers available, the numbers of jobs potentially available, and the kinds of skills which are required to perform in those jobs. Third, Vocational Education, if it is to encompass all levels of students, must not be considered a separate discipline; it should be considered as that segment of the educational process that prepares people for jobs. Primary emphasis then must be given to the meaningfulness of job preparation in keeping with the potential capabilities of the individual students.

Efficacy of the Team Approach

The concept of the team approach to Special Education and Vocational Education of the educable mentally retarded student was discussed in detail by the participants. It was concluded that this kind of a program is predicated upon several basic factors which should be emphasized. They are:

1. The mentally retarded child possesses the same personal worth and importance to himself and society as a whole as any other student.
2. A democracy is predicated upon the idea of the right of every man to develop his potential to his fullest extent.
3. The unskilled and semi-skilled worker is vital to our economic life.
4. Realizing the importance of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers to our national economy, they must be provided with a program that is:
 - a. Prescriptive in its approach.

- b. Developmental in keeping with the particular characteristics of the individual, and
 - c. Realistically structured in terms of the individual and community needs.
5. Ultimate success of a team approach in education is largely based upon the definition and acceptance of the general broad objectives of education by the faculty and school administration.

Special Education and Vocational Education Training Needs for the Mentally Retarded Student

Each participant was assigned the task of setting up a tentative program integrating Special Education and Vocational Education using a broad developmental concept of the nature of behavior. Each participant was to begin with a rationale for such a program, define general and specific objectives, concluding with feasible techniques for implementation. The major problem areas in setting up an integrated program to meet the needs of the special class student were as follows:

- 1. Broad general areas of program development:
 - a. The type of Vocational Education program that is feasible for the educable mentally retarded adolescent is based upon his personal characteristics as well as his potential for work success as far as the areas of academic and psychomotor skills are concerned.
 - b. Provisions must be made within the school to consider the various behavioral aspects of the students not just the narrow learning of academic skills.
 - c.. Teachers must develop a method of selecting the specific vocational experiences that will be of the greatest value to the individual student.
 - d. Teachers must make the best use of existing facilities and where possible, change or add to inadequate facilities.
 - e. Sequential planning must be done in order to provide a systematic developmental approach to the instructional program.
 - f. Labor and industry must be involved in the program in order to effectively integrate within the educational team the community services and employment opportunities, that are, and will be, available to the students.

- g. All aspects of Vocational Education, including distributive education, should be involved in the total planning of the programs.
 - h. Federal, state, and local financing of the programs should be investigated and taken full advantage of in order to accomplish the objectives of the program. Where more effective legislation is needed, local legislators should be contacted and apprised of the educational needs so that they may be familiar with them upon their return to the legislatures.
 - i. Universities should be familiarized with the programs as they are developing so that they will be training educational personnel both in Special Education as well as in Vocational Education who are able to work in a cooperative, team approach.
2. Specialists in the areas of educational rehabilitation counseling, federal and/or state employment agencies, social work, school psychology, protected workshop, and school administration are potential resource personnel to the teachers and the program in planning and implementing ways and means of achieving the various objectives of the programs.
 3. The Special Education teachers and Vocational Education teachers strongly suggested the need of a prescriptive approach to instruction in conjunction with determining the specific characteristics of the children as well as the specific education objectives for each one of the children. Using as a guideline the representative samples of mentally retarded individuals (common characteristics as ascribed by the group), teachers included the following as specific and immediate objectives to be considered:
 - a. The persons who realistically could be considered for the kind of program under discussion would be the educable mentally retarded. This type of program would also be of value to potential school drop-outs, learning disabilities, and children with other kinds of academic problems as well as the slow learner.
 - b. Systematic methods of selection should be employed with defined criteria of who would be included in the program.
 - c. No specific length of program should be determined, but the length would be in terms of the development and progress of the individual. Thus, an individual would stay in the program for as long as he was showing significant progress toward a higher level of vocation.

- d. In regard to competency, the same criteria should be applied as for three. Competency would not be in terms of the group, but of the individual.
- e. The persons involved in the program should have access to current literature and information that would enable them to keep up to date with current employment practices, jobs available in the community, and the nature of these jobs. The relationship established with the employers, trade unions, employment services, and so forth should be continuous.
- f. Parents should be involved in the program wherever possible, particularly at the job training and job placement stages.
- g. Evaluative techniques should be developed to insure that the objectives of the program are being achieved, to point out changes that are needed where objectives are not being achieved, and for purposes of demonstrating to the public as well as the school administration the values of the program.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. U. S. Office of Education approval of such projects should be received by the institution conducting the workshop at a date in early spring. Only in this way can appropriate final plans be made that can be carried out. Also, only in this way can the desired participants be invited and committed.
2. The original concept of inviting teams of teachers (a Special Educator and a Vocational Educator) from the same school is still a good one and should be considered in any future planning.
3. Because of the timing and inability to apply selective criteria to the selection of workshop participants, the planned evaluation procedures could not be used. Future workshops should have evaluation methods built into the planning.
4. In reference to the Workshop outcomes, the following recommendations were made:
 - a. The Special Education and Vocational Education team should orient the principal and the general school administration with the kind of program being attempted, its assets and limitations and specific goals.
 - b. Teachers should familiarize themselves with the school curriculum as indigenous to the particular school. Using the curriculum as a guideline, a developmental approach should be used in keeping with the needs of each student as well as the needs of the community.
 - c. Attempts should be made to integrate the two disciplines (Special Education and Vocational Education) so as to reinforce and educationally compliment each other. If the school curriculum is lacking in respect to the mentally retarded student, it is the responsibility of the two disciplines to develop such programs.
 - d. Positive and negative role definitions of the members of the team must be made clear so that each person will know his specific responsibilities and authorities in reference to the total program.
 - e. A sound basic relationship must be established between the school and community. If effective teaching is done the product will help form this relationship.

- f. Student selection procedures must be made clear to the entire school staff to avoid the program becoming a "catch all" or "dumping ground".
- g. The Vocational Education teacher should have available to him the student's total records or any other kind of behavioral assessment information that has been made in regard to that student.
- h. A working relationship must be established between the teachers, school counselors, school administrators, employers, and laboring groups within the community. These groups working together can do the most effective kind of planning of specific programs needed by these students.
- i. Continuous workshops of the type in which this group participated should be conducted to insure continued development, cooperation, and coordination. The initial workshop should be longer in duration (three weeks instead of two). Follow-up workshops on both local, area, and regional bases should be conducted annually.
- j. Methods of continuous evaluation of individual programs should be developed and instituted.

APPENDIX A

WORKSHOP CONSULTANTS

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Title, Institution, Address</u> |
|------------------|--|
| Herbert D. Brum | Supervisor of Disadvantaged Youth and Work Study Program State Department of Education State Office Building Columbus, Ohio 43215 |
| Herbert Carroll | Coordinator of Work Study Program Dayton Board of Education Dayton, Ohio 45406 |
| Leslie F. Crabbe | Assistant State Supervisor of Agricultural Education State Department of Education State Office Building Columbus, Ohio 43215 |
| Harry Davis | State Supervisor of Trade and Industrial Education State Department of Education State Office Building Columbus, Ohio 43215 |
| Gordon Eddy | Assistant State Supervisor of Business and Office Education State Department of Education State Office Building Columbus, Ohio 43215 |
| Richard Kelsey | Assistant State Supervisor of Measurement and Evaluation State Department of Education State Office Building Columbus, Ohio 43215 |
| Robert Koon | Assistant State Supervisor of Distributive Education State Department of Education State Office Building Columbus, Ohio 43215 |

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| Robert Lavelly | Lecturer in Mental Retardation University of South Florida Tampa, Florida 33620 |
| Margaret Iutsch | Special Education Instructor Columbus Public Schools Columbus, Ohio 43215 |
| Elizabeth Mackey | Instructor in Home Economics Bowling Green University Bowling Green, Ohio 43402 |
| Joan McFadden | Coordinator of Home Economics Program Beaver Creek High School Lima, Ohio 45801 |
| Robert Nelson | Director of Special Education San Diego University San Diego, California 92100 |
| Bernard C. Nye | State Supervisor of Distributive Education State Department of Education State Office Building Columbus, Ohio 43215 |
| Frank A. Oliverio | Assistant State Supervisor of Trade and Industrial Education State Department of Education State Office Building Columbus, Ohio 43215 |
| James Precht | Coordinator of Adult Education Courter Technical High School Cincinnati, Ohio 45200 |
| Allen Speiser | Director of Sheltered Workshops and Rehabilitation Services for the Mentally Retarded Syracuse, New York 13066 |
| Godfrey Stevens | Professor of Special Education University of Pittsburg Pittsburg, Pennsylvania 15213 |
| John Stocz | Coordinator of Occupational Work Experience Program Market High School 585 Market Street Warren, Ohio 44481 |

Randolph Tarrier

District Supervisor of North Central Ohio
Guidance Services
State Department of Education
State Office Building
Columbus, Ohio 43215

John W. Weatherford

Assistant State Supervisor of Distributive
Education
State Department of Education
State Office Building
Columbus, Ohio 43215

APPENDIX B

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Institution</u> | <u>Home Address</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Eugene Bach | Highland Senior High School | 9135 Erie Street Highland, Indiana 46322 |
| Donald W. Bates | East Detroit Public Schools | 1579 Hampton Drive Mount Clemens, Michigan 48043 |
| Betty Chapman | McGuffey Junior High | 2022 Northcliff Drive Columbus, Ohio 43224 |
| Don Christensen | Springfield School System | 351 North 27th Street Battle Creek, Michigan 49015 |
| Charles E. Daugherty | Madison Township High School | 15 Grand Avenue Trotwood, Ohio 45426 |
| Helen M. Dwyer | Bedford High School | 15715 Biltmore Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44128 |
| Ronald G. Flesch | Pennfield High School | 360 East Avenue North Battle Creek, Michigan 48017 |
| William B. Heideman | Division of Vocational Rehabilitation | 3309 East State Street Rockford, Illinois 61602 |
| Bessie Hoeflich | Pleasant Local School | 577 East Mark Street Marion, Ohio 43302 |
| Sharon Lee | Clarfield Elementary | 502 Wilson Avenue Columbus, Ohio 43105 |
| John S. Lis, Jr. | Macomb School District | 28070 Hoover, Apt. #1 Warren, Michigan 47093 |
| Howard R. Maynard | Macomb School District | 44001 Garfield Street Mount Clemens, Michigan 48043 |
| Wilbur Meyer | Franklin Township Community School | 8939 Maple Hill Wanamaker Branch Indianapolis, Indiana 46239 |
| Joseph Morman | Pleasant Local School | 832 East Center Street Marion, Ohio 43302 |

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|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Walter Page | Bartholomew Consolidated School | 2692 Wildwood Lane Columbus, Indiana 47201 |
| Donald O. Phillips | Southwestern Board of Education | 1158 South Harris Avenue Columbus, Ohio 43204 |
| Dorman Ronk | Ashland High School | 710 Grant Street Ashland, Ohio 44805 |
| Paul Schuyler | Highland Senior High School | 8008 Kennedy Avenue Highland, Indiana 46322 |
| Jean Sherman | Gahanna Lincoln High School | 4024 Glenda Place Columbus, Ohio 43220 |
| Frank M. Simmons | Albion Public Schools | 153 Stanley Street Jackson, Michigan 49203 |
| Ella Sullenberger | McArthur Senior High School | McArthur, Ohio 45651 |
| Don Thomas | Macomb School District | 44001 Garfield Road Mount Clemens, Michigan 48043 |
| Julia Waugh | Third Street School | 502 Wilson Avenue Columbus, Ohio 43205 |
| William E. Weiss | Central High School | 656 Thurber Drive, West Columbus, Ohio 43215 |
| Wilbur H. Whately | Avondale Senior High School | 906 East Fifth Street Royal Oak, Michigan 48067 |
| Sue Ann Yovanovick | Ben Davis High School | 1448 North Berwich Avenue Indianapolis, Indiana 46222 |

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| IDENTIFIERS * 1) Interdisciplinary Workshop for Special Education and Vocational Education Teachers; 2) Center for Vocational and Technical Education; 3) Ohio State University | | | | | |
| ABSTRACT An interdisciplinary workshop for special education and vocational education teachers was held at the Ohio State University in 1968 to provide an opportunity for the study and development of programs for educable mentally retarded students. Specialists gave presentations which provided a basis for discussion of such topics as program admission and job preparation as they apply to such students. Major guidelines for setting up integrated programs for special education students included: (1) basing vocational programs on the student's personal characteristics as well as his potential for work success, (2) the use of specialists in program planning and implementation, and (3) the use of prescriptive instruction in conjunction individual characteristics and specific behavioral objectives for each student. (Author) | | | | | |